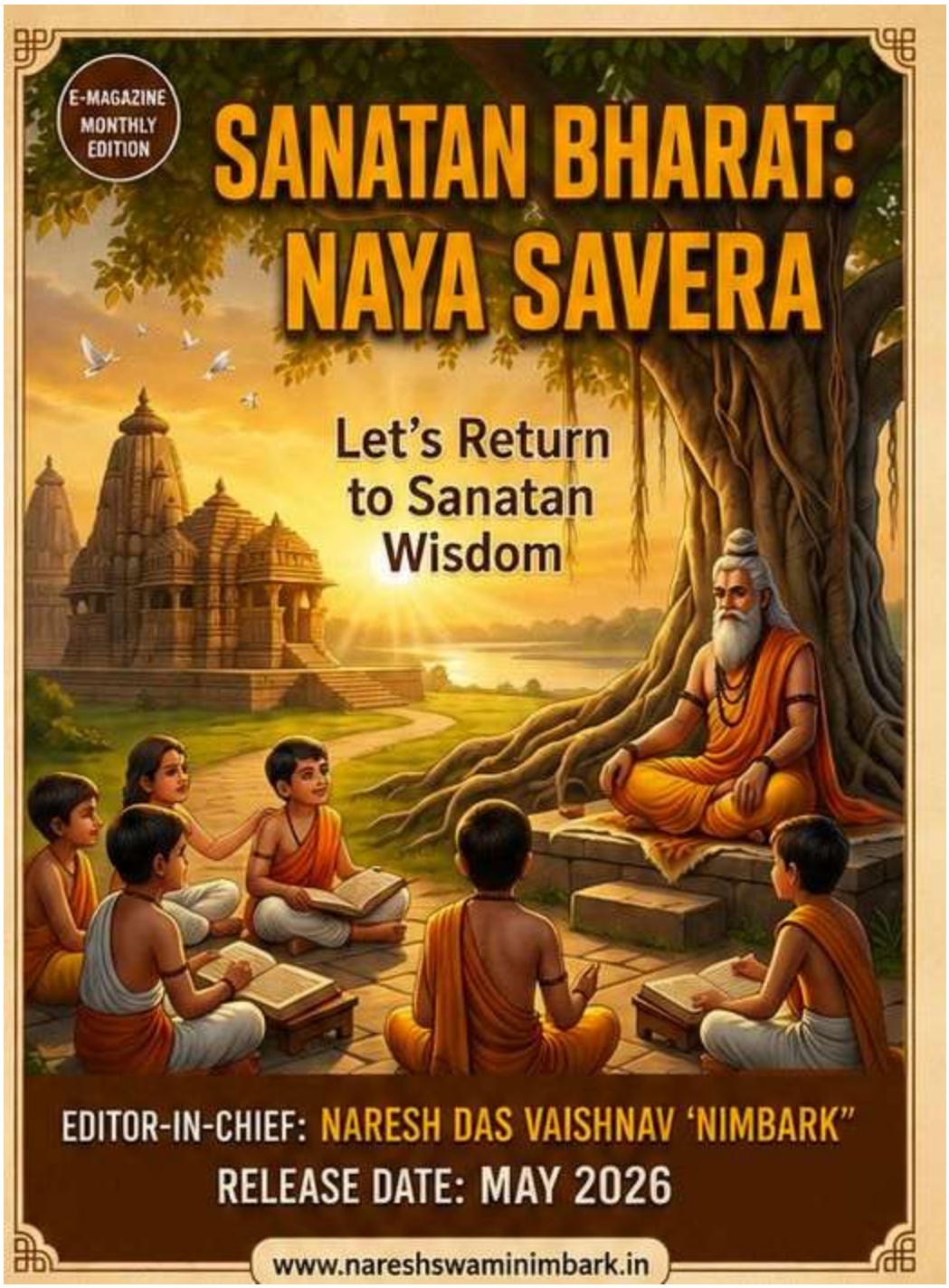
E-MAGAZINE
MONTHLY
EDITION
SANATAN BHARAT:
NAYA SAVERA
Let's Return
to Sanatan
Wisdom
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF: NARESH DAS VAISHNAV 'NIMBARK"
RELEASE DATE: MAY 2026
www.nareshswaminimbark.in

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Editorial

Why Sanatana is Essential — Today and Always

Dear Readers,

Radhe Radhe! Jai Shri Krishna!

Sanatana is not merely a religion — it is an eternal, scientific, and philosophical way of life. For thousands of years it has been the very soul of Bharatbhumi, standing unshaken through the storms of time, glowing like a lamp even through the winds of invasion. This is the invincible power of Sanatana.

In today's fast-paced world we are drifting away from our glorious roots. Entangled in the illusion of Western culture, we are forgetting that the knowledge our sages gave us thousands of years ago is equally relevant today — whether it is atomic science, astronomy, psychology, or medicine.

As a retired military officer I dedicated the finest years of my life to the service of this nation. Standing on the borders I experienced that the defence of this land lies not only in weapons, but also in the protection of culture and Dharma.

The Nimbarka Vaishnava Bairagi tradition has protected this culture for centuries. Our ancestors were both warriors and devotees — holding a rosary in one hand and a weapon in the other, they kept Sanatana Dharma alive.

This issue includes experiences of pilgrimages, exposition of Dharma-shastra, life stories of great souls, and the application of Sanatana values in modern life. May it bring new energy and inspiration to your life.

Heartfelt gratitude to all readers, scholars, and collaborators. This magazine is not the effort of one person — it is the sadhana of a family. Dharmo Rakshati Rakshitah.

— Naresh Das Vaishnav 'Nimbark', Editor

Jai Hind! Jai Bharat! Radhe Radhe!

Chapter 1

Pandharpur Pilgrimage — At the Feet of the Lord

Visit Period: 12–17 January 2021 | Location: Pandharpur, Maharashtra — Nimbarka Bairagi Math

Pandharpur — situated on the sacred soil of Maharashtra, this pilgrimage site holds the supreme place in the hearts of Vaishnava devotees. The Shri Vitthal-Rukmini Temple on the banks of the Bhima (Chandrabhaga) river is one of India's most revered shrines.

When we first set foot on this holy ground on 12 January 2021, the mind experienced an indescribable peace. The Nimbarka Bairagi Math at Pandharpur is a living testimony of our tradition — where the worship of Radha-Krishna has flowed unbroken for centuries.

The peace found sitting on the bank of the Chandrabhaga river cannot be expressed in words. The gentle murmur of the river, the strains of bhajans from the distance — together they create an atmosphere in which the mind naturally turns toward God.

The sattvic energy of the Vitthal-Rukmini Temple is unparalleled. Attending the morning aarati, having the divine darshana of the Radha-Krishna couple, and holding satsang with the sadhus of the Math — these five days became priceless treasures of my life.

This journey was not mere tourism — it was a path to self-realisation. A detailed discussion with the Mahant of the Nimbarka Sampradaya on the history and warrior aspect of the Vaishnava Bairagi tradition proved invaluable to my research.

At the time of departure on 17 January the heart was heavy, yet filled with gratitude. This sacred land calls one back again and again.

"Bhaktih pareshAnubhavo viraktir anyatra caisha trika ekakAlah."
— Shrimad Bhagavatam 11.2.42
(Experience of the Supreme, exclusive devotion, and detachment from the world arise simultaneously.)

Chapter 2

Tattva Vedi — Jaitaran Pilgrimage

Visit Period: 17–18 July 2022 | Location: Jaitaran, Beawar, Rajasthan

The soil of Rajasthan is the meeting ground of valour and devotion, where for centuries the warriors of Sanatana Dharma shed their blood. The 'Tattva Vedi' at Jaitaran is one such historic site.

When we entered Jaitaran on 17 July 2022, the earth itself carried a special fragrance — of sacrifice, valour, and unbroken devotion. Here the Vaishnava Bairagi warriors had protected Sanatana Dharma for centuries.

The conversation with Pithadheeshwara Shri Magnidas Bairagi ji was extremely enlightening. He illuminated those pages of Bairagi warrior history that have been neglected by mainstream historiography. Their resistance against Mughal aggression was extraordinary.

The significance of Tattva Vedi is not only religious but national. Its stones speak the tales of unnamed warriors who sacrificed their lives for Dharma yet never found a place in history books.

As a military officer and historian, it is my duty to document the stories of these warriors so that they reach future generations.

Departing on 18 July we carried one firm resolve — the stories of these brave souls shall reach the coming generations. Victory to the Vaishnava Bairagi tradition!

"Shastrena rakshite rashtre shastra-charcha pravartate."
(Only in a nation protected by the sword can the study of scriptures flourish.)

Chapter 3

Kakabhushundi & Garuda — The Glory of Rama's Name

In the Uttarkanda of Ramcharitmanas, Goswami Tulsidas ji has revealed the supreme truth of life through the dialogue of Kakabhushundi and Garuda.

Kakabhushundi — a crow who became supremely wise through devotion and humility. And Garuda — Vishnu's vehicle, who was arrogant of his superiority. The central message is that before knowledge and devotion, lineage and outward greatness count for nothing.

The chanting of Rama's name is the single, simplest remedy for the destruction of ego and the welfare of the soul — no expensive ritual, no severe austerity, only sincere, wholehearted repetition of Rama's name.

Humility is true strength. Even the mighty Garuda had to bow before Kakabhushundi, because in knowledge and devotion Kakabhushundi was superior.

As a soldier too I experienced that true leadership springs not from arrogance but from humility. The officer who listens to his soldiers is the true leader.

The glory of Rama's name is limitless — in crisis, in joy, in solitude, it is always a support. It is the supreme medicine that destroys all afflictions of the mind and purifies the soul.

"Ram Naam manideep dharu jih dehari dwar.
Tulsi bhitar baherahun jaun chahasi ujiyar."
— Ramcharitmanas
(Place the lamp of Rama's name at the threshold of your lips; O Tulsi, if you seek light within and without.)

Chapter 4

Love of Parents — The First Deities

In Sanatana Dharma parents are given the status of living deities. The declaration of the Taittiriya Upanishad — 'Matri devo bhava, Pitri devo bhava' — is not merely a commandment; it is the eternal truth of creation.

Mother — who set aside the comforts of her own body to give us birth, who stayed awake through nights to protect us. To serve such a mother is not a burden — it is our greatest good fortune.

Father — who burns himself for the family, suppresses his own desires to fulfil his children's dreams, and strives ceaselessly to uphold the family's honour. The debt to such a father can never be repaid.

It is a painful trend in today's generation to send elderly parents to old-age homes. This is not only against Dharma but against humanity itself. It is our Dharma to hold the hands that once taught us to walk.

The story of Shravan Kumar presents the ideal before our society — carrying his blind parents in a kavad to take them on pilgrimage is the supreme expression of Indian civilisation.

In my own life, my parents' blessings have always been a shield. In the most difficult situations in the army, their blessing was my strength. Looking back today, every success in life has been their gift.

> *"Sarvatirthamayi mata sarvadevamayi pitah."*
> *(Mother embodies all places of pilgrimage; Father embodies all deities.)*

Chapter 5

Education & Culture — Roots and Wings

Education is that which makes a human truly human. Merely obtaining a degree is not education. True education is that which awakens character, humility, patriotism, and dedication to Dharma — hence our sages declared: 'Sa vidya ya vimukthaye' (That alone is knowledge which liberates).

Today's generation needs to be made aware of India's rich heritage — Ayurveda, Yoga, and our glorious history — rather than being swept away by Western culture. A child who forgets his own language and knows nothing of his ancestors — how will he become the nation's future?

The school at home — where grandparents told stories, where lamps were lit at dusk, where food was first offered to God — must be revived. This 'home school' is more effective than any institution.

No system of education can replace the Samskaras. The sixteen Samskaras — from birth to death — bind the individual to society, remind him of his responsibilities, and give life its meaning.

In the army I observed that soldiers who have Samskaras and discipline never break under adversity. In difficulty a weapon may be lost — never one's Samskaras.

A request to parents — whether or not you give children expensive toys, do tell them the stories of the Ramayana, Mahabharata, and the Gita. These stories are life's greatest textbook.

> *"Vidya dadati vinayam, vinayad yati patratam. Patratvaad dhanamapnoti, dhanat dharmam tatah sukham." (Knowledge gives humility; humility gives worthiness; worthiness gives wealth; wealth gives Dharma; Dharma gives happiness.)*

Chapter 6

Tulsi Mala & Tilak — Scientific Significance

Modern science is today confirming facts that our sages knew thousands of years ago. The Tulsi mala and Tilak — both traditions are not only spiritually significant but scientifically very beneficial.

Tulsi (Ocimum sanctum) has been called the 'Queen of Herbs' by modern science. Wearing a Tulsi mala creates a special electromagnetic field in the body that reduces stress, regulates blood pressure, and keeps the mind focused. The wood of Tulsi contains elements that enter through the skin and enhance immune function.

Tilak — especially the Urdhvapundra (Vaishnava tilak) — is applied at the Ajna chakra on the forehead. From an acupressure perspective this is a highly significant point. Pressure here reduces stress, improves concentration, and strengthens eyesight.

Sandalwood tilak cools the skin and relieves headaches. Gopichandan tilak contains special mineral elements that activate the Ajna chakra — hence applying tilak is considered essential during meditation and spiritual practice.

In the Vaishnava Bairagi tradition the tilak is not merely a religious identity but a sadhana. The resolve made each day while applying the tilak keeps one on the path of Dharma throughout the day.

Today when the younger generation dismisses these traditions as 'superstition,' science itself is validating them. Our traditions are not superstition — they are scientifically proven methods refined over centuries of experience.

Tulsi Mala: instrument of mental focus ✦ Urdhvapundra Tilak: awakening of the Ajna Chakra
These are both our identity and our science.

Chapter 7

Road Safety — A Veteran Soldier's Appeal

Fighting an enemy on the battlefield is one thing; dying on the road through one's own carelessness is quite another — and far more tragic. In India nearly one and a half lakh people lose their lives in road accidents every year — a number greater than the casualties of many wars.

As a soldier I learnt the importance of discipline. Discipline on the road means obeying traffic rules, restraint in driving, and alertness towards others. This is not merely a rule — it is a duty of life-protection.

Helmet and seat belt — these two small things can make the difference between life and death. Research shows that helmets reduce the fatality rate of two-wheeler riders by 42%. Seat belts save up to 45% of lives in car accidents.

Talking on a mobile phone while driving is today's greatest problem. When you drive while talking on the phone, your reaction capacity becomes equivalent to that of a drunk driver. This endangers not only yourself but everyone on the road.

Drive safely for your family. A person who is the sole support of his parents, who is a father to his children, a life partner to his spouse — he endangers his entire family through reckless driving.

⚠ Five Principles of Road Safety:
1. Always wear helmet and seat belt
2. Keep mobile phones off while driving
3. Never drive under the influence of alcohol
4. Follow all traffic rules
5. If tired, rest — life is priceless

Chapter 8

Vidura's Wisdom — Philosophy of Life

The dialogue between Vidura and Dhritarashtra in the Udyogaparva of the Mahabharata is celebrated as Vidura-Niti. Vidura — neither a king nor a Brahmin — is considered the most wise character in the Mahabharata for his knowledge, policy, and dedication to Dharma.

Adherence to Truth — Vidura's first and foremost teaching. 'There is no greater austerity than truth, and no greater sin than falsehood.' In an age when untruth has become normal behaviour, this counsel is even more relevant.

Abandoning Anger — Vidura described anger as man's greatest enemy. Even as a soldier I learnt that on the battlefield too, anger is more deadly than the enemy.

Freedom from Ego — Ego destroys wisdom, breaks relationships, and ultimately causes a person's downfall.

The Test of a Friend — 'One who stands by you in adversity, speaks truth, wishes you well, and is selfless — that is a true friend.' In today's world this touchstone is more valuable than ever.

The teachings of Vidura-Niti are equally useful for the householder, the statesman, the soldier, and the student. When selfishness surrounds us, these principles show the right path.

> *"Na kashchidapi janati kim kasya shvo bhavishyati. Atah shvah karaniyani kuryadadyaiva buddhiman."* — *Vidura-Niti*
>
> *(No one knows what tomorrow holds; therefore the wise person does today what needs to be done tomorrow.)*

Chapter 9

Vishnu Purana — Protection of Dharma & Devotion

The Vishnu Purana is one of the eighteen Mahapuranas and holds the supreme place in Vaishnava tradition.

The story of Prahlada — the finest example of the invincibility of devotion. He was cast into fire, made to be bitten by serpents, and thrown under an elephant's feet — yet not a hair of Prahlada, who chanted Hari's name, was harmed.

The message of the Dashavatara — Lord Vishnu took avatara age after age to protect Dharma: Matsya, Kurma, Varaha, Narasimha, Vamana, Parashurama, Rama, Krishna, Buddha, and Kalki — these ten avataras are the ten steps of humanity's uplift.

'Dharmo Rakshati Rakshitah' — Dharma protects those who protect it. Nations and civilisations that preserved their Dharmic cultural values are still alive today. History testifies to this.

Modern man should take inspiration from the Vishnu Purana — never abandon the path of Dharma even in adversity. To remain steadfast like Prahlada is true valour.

"Dharmo Rakshati Rakshitah"
— Vishnu Purana
(Protect Dharma — Dharma shall protect you.)

Chapter 10

Lives and Sacrifices of Great Souls

Sanatana culture is an unbroken saga of the sacrifice and tapasya of great souls. Whenever society went astray, some great soul arose and showed the right path.

Adi Shankaracharya (788–820 CE)

In a mere 32 years he re-established Advaita Vedanta, founded four Mathas in the four directions, and traversed all of India on foot to free Sanatana Dharma from heterodox movements. His life declares: not age but resolve matters.

Guru Nanak Dev Ji (1469–1539 CE)

'Nam japna, kirat karna, vand chhakna' — these three principles remain as relevant as ever. He raised his voice against caste discrimination and proclaimed the unity of all humanity.

Swami Vivekananda (1863–1902 CE)

His thunderous words awakened sleeping India. His 1893 address in Chicago introduced the world to India's cultural supremacy. 'Arise, awake, and stop not till the goal is reached' — this message is most needed by today's youth.

> *"Arise! Awake! And stop not till the goal is reached."*
> *— Swami Vivekananda*

Chapter 11

Sattvic Lifestyle and Yoga

'As the food, so the mind' — this is the foundational principle of Indian medical philosophy. Ayurveda knew thousands of years ago that food influences not only the body but the mind and soul. Modern science is now validating this as the 'gut-brain connection'.

Sattvic food — fresh fruits, green vegetables, milk, ghee, lentils, and grains — keeps the mind calm, thoughts clear, and the body energetic. Rajasic and tamasic food brings agitation and instability to the mind.

Pranayama — the science of breath. Anuloma-Viloma, Bhastrika, Kapalbhati — these are the jewels of pranayama that strengthen the lungs and purify the blood. Even 20–30 minutes of daily pranayama can transform life.

Meditation — the army of the mind. Just as an army needs regular training, the mind needs regular practice of meditation. It sharpens concentration and decision-making, and dissolves mental stress.

As a soldier I experienced that without a sattvic lifestyle it is impossible to maintain long-term physical and mental capacity. A soldier posted on the border who follows sattvic diet and regular exercise can fulfil his duty with twice the capacity.

Daily routine: rising at Brahma-muhurta, Surya-namaskar, asana-pranayama, sattvic food, diligence through the day, and gratitude to God at night — this is the routine that makes one healthy, happy, and successful.

Five Pillars of Sattvic Life:
1. Sattvic food 2. Regular Pranayama 3. Meditation
4. Spirit of service 5. Faith in God

Chapter 12

Sanatana Knowledge Quiz

The following ten questions on Sanatana Dharma are for readers' knowledge and enjoyment. Test yourself and become an ambassador of Dharma.

1. **Question: Who is the founder of the Nimbarka Sampradaya?**

   Answer: Shri Nimbarkacharya ji, who established the Dvaitadvaita (Bhedabheda) philosophy.

2. **Question: What is the historical significance of the Vaishnava Bairaghis?**

   Answer: During the Mughal era they protected Sanatana Dharma with devotion and arms together.

3. **Question: What is the scientific significance of the Tulsi mala?**

   Answer: Enhances immunity, reduces stress, and keeps the mind focused.

4. **Question: Where is the Urdhvapundra Tilak applied?**

   Answer: At the Ajna Chakra — centre of the forehead. An acupressure point that improves focus.

5. **Question: Which epic does Vidura-Niti belong to?**

   Answer: The Udyogaparva of the Mahabharata — where Vidura counselled Dhritarashtra on policy and Dharma.

6. **Question: What is the other name of the Chandrabhaga river at Pandharpur?**

   Answer: The Bhima river — it flows near the Vitthal-Rukmini Temple in Maharashtra.

7. **Question: In which scripture does 'Dharmo Rakshati Rakshitah' appear?**

   Answer: The Vishnu Purana. Meaning: Dharma protects those who protect it.

8. **Question: In which Kanda is the Kakabhushundi-Garuda dialogue?**

   Answer: The Uttarkanda of Ramcharitmanas — teaching the glory of Rama's name and humility.

9. **Question: When did Swami Vivekananda deliver his speech in Chicago?**

   Answer: 11 September 1893, at the Parliament of the World's Religions.

10. **Question: In which Samskara does the Guru-Shishya tradition begin?**

    Answer: The Upanayana Samskara (sacred thread ceremony) — the boy is sent to the Gurukul.

Appendix

Important Dates & Festivals of the Vaishnava Tradition

Throughout the year the Sanatana Vaishnava Bairagi tradition celebrates many sacred festivals with special puja, bhajan-kirtan, and satsang.

Festival	Traditional Date	Significance
Janmashtami	Bhadrapada Krishna Ashtami	Sri Krishna's birth festival
Radhashtami	Bhadrapada Shukla Ashtami	Radharani's manifestation day
Nimbarka Jayanti	Kartika Purnima	Nimbarkacharya's appearance day
Ekadashi	11th of each fortnight	Special fast for Vishnu devotees
Rama Navami	Chaitra Shukla Navami	Sri Rama's birth festival
Hanuman Jayanti	Chaitra Purnima	Hanuman ji's appearance day
Guru Purnima	Ashadha Purnima	Day of reverence to the Guru lineage
Tulsi Vivah	Kartika Shukla Ekadashi	Tulsi-Shaligrama marriage
Deepawali	Kartika Amavasya	Festival of lights — Lakshmi Puja
Makar Sankranti	14 January	Sun worship and sesame-seed charity

Special content for all these sacred dates is available at www.nareshswaminimbark.in

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SANATAN BHARAT: NAYA SAVERA

(Monthly E-Magazine - May 2026)

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